

# WARNING!!!

## IS THERE LEAD IN YOUR SCHOOL'S DRINKING WATER?

The recent situation in Flint, Michigan brought attention to the long-standing health hazard of lead contamination in public drinking water. It didn't take parents long to realize that aging facilities with lead-bearing pipes and fixtures, serving drinking fountains providing water to their children wasn't a good equation. The school community soon began to question the safety of their school's drinking water.

### Before You Sample

CESA FM has information gathering guidelines in place before any water can be sampled. They include:

- 1. Know the school's source of water** – For schools that receive water from a public water system, CESA FM will work with administration to obtain a copy of the most current lead test results, as well as to find out if the water is optimized for corrosion control. This information will be used to determine appropriate remedies should any lead problems be identified.
- 2. Check for recalled water coolers** – CESA FM is especially interested in any water coolers containing lead parts or solder or manufactured in a facility with lead-lined tanks.
- 3. Develop a sample plan** – CESA FM highly recommends a written sample plan, and will aid the District in the development of a detailed plan to be shared with any personnel who will be involved in the sampling process. Components of the plan will include:
  - Conduct a pre-sampling inspection to identify each outlet that will be tested for lead
  - Check aerators for debris; clean if necessary
  - Make note of cooler make and model
  - Note any locations where electrical wires are grounded to water pipes
  - Identify locations of recalled water coolers



### Where to Sample

It didn't take long for schools to start calling CESA 10 Facilities Management Department (CESA FM) to test for lead in their water. Any outlet for potable water is a potential source of drinking water, but some outlets are more regularly used by students and staff for drinking, cooking, or making coffee. Due to the limited funding most districts face, CESA FM focuses their lead testing on the high priority sites, such as:

- Drinking fountains, both bubbler and water cooler style
- Kitchen sinks
- Classroom combination sinks and drinking fountains
- Home economic rooms sinks
- Teacher's lounge sink, nurse's office sink
- Classroom sinks in special education classrooms
- Any sink known to be or visibly used for consumption (i.e. coffeemaker or cups are nearby)



- 4. Communicate your plans** – CESA FM believes in consistent and transparent communication, and will aid your District in openly communicating your goals to maintenance staff, teachers, parents, and students. Actively discussing the water sampling plan and staff roles early in the process will avoid confusion and communication breakdowns at a later stage.



## How to Sample

CESA FM will follow the EPA's guidelines as outlined in the *3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools*. This includes but is not limited to:

- Only testing outlets that have been inactive for at least 6-8 hours
- Making sure no water has been drawn from the tap prior to collecting the sample
- Using only certified lab approved sampling containers
- Label container with proper sample recording form
- Preparing the container for shipping according to the certified lab's instructions
- Delivering the sample to the lab within 14 days of collection

CESA FM will use a certified lab to test the sample, and the detailed analysis of the results will be delivered to the District by a Certified Lead Investigator.

## Dealing with the Problem

Once a problem has been identified, CESA FM will work with the District to determine acceptable solutions. Our team of technical experts will weigh:

- Cost
- Likelihood of success
- Availability of water
- Staffing requirements

Once all pertinent factors have been evaluated, CESA FM will suggest short-term measures and permanent remedies based on EPA guidance and each District's unique situation.

Schools that discover lead contamination in their water have various routes they can take to remedy the problem, including:

- Replacing the plumbing system
- Using replaceable filters on spouts
- Switching to bottled water
- Identifying potable/nonpotable water sources

**If your District is interested in learning more about lead testing, call 888-947-4701 or email [facilities@cesa10.k12.wi.us](mailto:facilities@cesa10.k12.wi.us).**

Summary provided by:

